



MEP NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2021

Welcome to the first edition of the MEP newsletter – a place for everyone to share news and information.

MEP Summer Picnic

Monday 2nd August was the date for the MEP picnic/social and of course, inevitably, it rained. What else would it do at the height of summer in the UK? We gathered /huddled by the Rotunda café in Preston Park; the café staff kindly took pity on us and let us sit on their outside verandah, so we only got slightly damp, and actually it was very jolly and there was a lot of laughter, coffee being spilled and small children going awol. I incompetently bought and served people hot drinks from the café (I think a lot of people got given the wrong thing, but never mind). It was great to welcome some of our students, old and new, including Huda, Sanad, Theresa and Jalal. And it was great to just be together, after what has been such a difficult time for all of us.

People need people! **Helen**



Crisis in Afghanistan

As we see what is happening in Afghanistan, no doubt many of us want to do something to help. If you wish to donate, volunteer, or help in other ways to support Afghan refugees, here is a really useful list of organisations throughout the UK which are responding to the situation in Afghanistan –see website at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f_pRifL8CH9x0sXwhDQ05gL5FTtC1VwqwobmghkX9_D4/edit

Misbah's Baking Course

I took a course called “Bake House” at Brighton Met in July and August 2021. It was run for eight weeks on Mondays from 11am until 4pm with a break for lunch.

There were three teachers, all women.



There were eight

students, also women. Some of the students came from Sheffield and some from London. The ingredients were provided by the college. I made different things - cookies and a cake with pineapples and strawberries. The facilities were good, the oven was nice and the tables were clean.

I enjoyed the course very much.

I learned new things about baking. I practised my English.



I understood what the teachers were saying. I recommend the course to other MEP students even if you only speak a little English. The course is free. The teachers and the students were very friendly. We helped each other. Now I would like to do another course in caring for older people.

Good News about Funding!

MEP has recently been awarded new funding from Awards for All; the funding will go towards MEP ongoing activities. Last year we received funding from Fonthill Foundation and from The English Language Centre (Brighton and Eastbourne). We are very grateful to these organisations, which recognise the huge dedication that volunteers and students put into MEP. Well done to the Funding Team for their success in these applications.

Beimnet and the Allotment

Did you know that MEP students can help at the allotment (garden)? Beimnet is one of the regulars, and we asked her to tell us about it:

What do you do when you go to the allotment?

I plant vegetables, clean the garden and tidy up, water the plants – and enjoy the beautiful place

What plants are growing there?

Tomatoes, coriander, spinach, chard, potatoes, courgettes, aubergine, beans, plums, chilli

How does it make you feel when you go to the allotment?

I feel relaxed and happy. I enjoy the fresh air. It helps me feel good physically and mentally.

If you would like to visit the allotment, and find out more about what you could do there, contact Will on WhatsApp, on 07965 756126



Laila's NHS Experience

On 4th May at 3.15 in the afternoon, I was going to pick up my sister from school. When I was on the zebra crossing, a car didn't stop to let me pass and hit me. I can't exactly remember what happened at this time but I can remember the intense pain I felt after being hit. One of the people managed to unlock my phone and call my mum to let her know. She came at the same time, as I was not far away from my home. After that the ambulance came with the police. The ambulance staff carried me to the car and went straight away to the hospital. I had an x-ray on all my body and it showed that I had a broken pelvis, right leg and lower spine as well. The doctor told me that I have to have an operation in the morning. I was so scared and cried a lot. But things went well. I didn't feel anything during the operation – it took five hours but I was sleeping. I stayed in hospital for 11 days. I think five of the days were in a common ward and the rest in a special ward. The nurses were very lovely and friendly and the

doctors as well but I didn't like the other patients. They made a noise all the time and I couldn't sleep well

Although the hospital looks comfortable, no one likes to be in it because it's so boring, especially during the Covid period as you can just have one visitor for one hour a day and I couldn't see my sister, brother or grandma. I really missed them when I was in the hospital. My mum looked after me when I left the hospital as I couldn't move for one month, then three months after that on two crutches, but now I am walking without them – not the same as before but much better than the last four months.

I want to study physiotherapy because it was my grandma's desire in the beginning, and my desire as well because my cousin also studies it. I am interested in it too and my interest in it increased after my accident and what I went through, as physiotherapy helped me a lot to walk again.



Do You Remember?

A poem by **Alison**

Do you remember when the world was moved
At the sight of a slight, tiny body lying,
face-down, in the sand
One hand outstretched
As if reaching, as if beseeching
For life?

Do you remember his name
His father's tears
His mother's body floating in the water
Someone's sister, someone's daughter?

Were they wrong to set sail
To risk all, to fail
Were they wrong to long for a better life
Free from fear, away from strife
A life such as ours?

We teach our children
To love, to care
To give, to share
What lesson then do they learn
If we turn our backs and say
'Go away, you are not wanted here'?

Welcome Refugees. Please.



Sewing Group News

We are a small friendly group providing an informal place to practise sewing skills, from basic sewing and small hand-sewing projects to more advanced dressmaking techniques. You can learn how to use a sewing machine and to follow a pattern, as well as how to adapt a pattern to fit or how to repair or alter items. We have sewing machines to use, and a selection of fabrics. Projects completed by our students over the last year have ranged from hand sewn and embroidered dolls, to masks and tote bags. Several of our students are now making progress with clothing projects (eg skirts and dresses), and our latest new project is to start learning and teaching crochet as well.

If you would like to join our group, please get in touch – we do have a waiting list but we would be happy to add your name. **Susan**

Are You Looking for Work?

Two MEP volunteers have set up an exciting new project called **The Launchpad Collective (TLC)**. They aim to help refugees who are looking for work to find a job in a safe, welcoming workplace. TLC works with businesses to help them become employers of sanctuary, and they also provide training for refugee job-seekers to unlock their full potential. Examples of their projects include the Work-Ready programme, which offers a 20 week Work Ready English course (aimed at Intermediate B1 level), a one to one buddy, well-being activities and online skills workshops and talks. They also offer a drop in scheme called 'Conversations About Work' for people with less English who still need support. They are very keen to encourage MEP students who are looking for work.

For further information visit their website at www.wearetlc.org.uk.

Apart from this, there are various courses available to help people look for work – eg run by Brighton and Hove City Council (eg **Next Steps ESOL Enterprise Course**, for more details email ACL@brighton-hove), or local colleges including Brighton Met who ran the cookery course which Misbah wrote about (www.gbmc.ac.uk/esol-courses).



Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove

Would you like to meet up with other women from a wide range of countries?

The **Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove**, run by volunteers, provides a platform for women from diverse cultures and backgrounds to meet, share experience and knowledge and support one another. Formed in 2017, its members meet regularly on Wednesday mornings, in the Brighton Jubilee Library, from 10.00 until 12.00. The meetings give them a chance to share food and information, exchange ideas and build friendships. Recent creative projects include the Illuminate Tapestry, a collection of nearly 100 individual squares, in which the women of Brighton and Hove used needlework to capture the spirit of where they are from and where they live now – see the picture below.

The network now has a membership of around 300 women, who take part in a wide range of activities. You are very welcome to come along to join in, to sew, help start a new project, or just to chat!

For further information see website at <https://niwbh.org/>



We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you have ideas for future editions, or would like to write something, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Susan, at the Sewing Group.

